

Office of Public Affairs
Weekly Salient Issues Ending February 28, 2014
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Regional Administrator Addresses Exchange Network – Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin spoke to more than 200 attendees at this week's 2014 Exchange Network National Meeting in Philadelphia, commending the group for progress in sharing environmental information and citing examples of how the Exchange Network has been utilized in Region III. EPA Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe also addressed the group this week. (Tom Damm, 4-5560)

TV Stations, Philadelphia Inquirer Cover Environmental Justice Event - Two Philadelphia television stations and a reporter from the Philadelphia Inquirer were among news media covering an environmental justice event in Philadelphia where EPA Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe highlighted three environmental justice grants totaling \$90,000 to assist overburdened low-income communities in developing solutions to local health and environmental issues. The event, which featured a tour with students showcasing their environmental projects, was held in conjunction with Environmental Justice Month and the 20th Anniversary of the signing of an Executive Order directing federal agencies to make environmental justice part of their missions. (Tom Damm, 4-5560; Roy Seneca 4-5567)

Regional Administrator Garvin Addresses Conference on Food Recovery and Sustainable Materials Management - RA Garvin on February 20 addressed more than 70 attendees at the *2014 Pennsylvania Organics Materials Management Summit* in Philadelphia. The summit is an annual event hosted by the Pennsylvania Recycling Marketing Center. The RA's remarks focused on the importance of decreasing the amount of food waste going to landfills. (Tom Damm, 4-5560)

Underground Injection Article Inaccurate - A February 14 article in the Bradford ERA had numerous inaccuracies about the Seneca Resources Underground Injection Control Permit. Although there were several wells to be plugged by Seneca Resources as part of their permit requirements, none of them are associated with the alleged improperly plugged wells reported in the article. In fact, the wells alleged to have been improperly plugged are associated with ARG's enhanced recovery operations near Russell City, and are separate and distinct from the Seneca permit proposal for an injection well in Highland Township. (David Sternberg, 4-5548)

Media Interest in the Safety of Charleston Drinking Continues - This week, reporters from the Wall Street Journal and the Charleston Gazette have contacted EPA for additional information about the drinking water safety and EPA's role in the response. Coordinated communication between the region and EPA headquarters continues. (Bonnie Smith, 4-5543; Terri White, 4-5523)

Response to Coal Ash Spill in Dan River Makes Headlines - Last week's coverage focused primarily on the two community briefings and the impacts that the intense weather has had on the response. There seem to be an increasing interest in the long-term and what is going to be done from a regulator perspective and specifically the cleanup in the Dan River. These issues were also raised at the community briefings. In a public radio interview this week, EPA coal ash expert Barnes Johnson talked about the science and the proposed regulations related to coal ash. He was joined by OSC Myles Bartos who discussed the progress of the response. This week, CNN reported that the state advised residents not to eat fish and avoid contact from the Dan River. Lots of local coverage from the Danville Bee continues, including an op-ed by a Virginia River Association on the need for transparency with the response. (Bonnie Smith, 4-5543; Terri White, 4-5523)

Media Are Not Contacting EPA about Coal Slurry Spill into Fields Creek in West Virginia - Local reporting on the spill in Field Creek has slowed, if not stopped. The local media have not contacted EPA for comments on the spill. The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) ordered all work, except for cleanup, halted at a coal preparation plant (Patriot Coal) that spilled more than 100,000 gallons of coal slurry into Fields Creek in Kanawha County on February 11. Patriot's Kanawha Eagle Prep Plant will remain idle "until the company has eliminated the potential for further pollution." It is believed a valve malfunctioned in a slurry line at the preparation plant sometime after 2:30 a.m. on Tuesday, allowing 108,000 gallons of coal slurry to escape into the creek about six miles above the Kanawha River. (Bonnie Smith, 4-5543)

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Images on Brownfields Sought Pittsburgh Business Times - Our regional brownfields team was terrific in responding to the request to by the Pittsburgh Business times for photos for consideration for a story that was planned to run on its front page. We provided images and also connected the editor with one of our brownfields grantees in the area who was willing to provide Pittsburgh related image, too. (Bonnie Smith, 4-5543)

Freedom Industries Response Remains in the Headlines - Local and national press continue to inquire about the quality of the drinking and for status reports on the progress. The Charleston Gazette environment reporter is looking at comparisons and contracts between how the West Virginia spill and how the North Carolina spill have been handled. (Terri White, 4-5523; Bonnie Smith, 4-5543)

Times Dispatch Reporting on Superfund in Virginia - The Richmond Times Dispatch environment reporter Rex Springston is working with sister papers across the state to examine the progress being made in cleanup up hazardous waste sites. HSCD's Stacie Driscoll and Paula Estornell provided a thorough and well thought out overview on progress of the private NPL sites and federal facility NPLs throughout the state. (Bonnie Smith, 4-5543; Terri White, 4-5523)

Intelligencer Inquires about Excavation at ChemFab - A reporter from the Doylestown Intelligencer who has been tracking EPA's progress on ChemFab, called for an update. He was interested to find out if the excavation had been affected by the last big snow storm. The excavation was not affected by the snow, because it has not yet begun. EPA is moving ahead on a signed access agreement to the excavation area. Access has been provided for groundwater sampling and results are anticipated in a few months. (Bonnie Smith, 4-5543)

RESS RELEASES

- Feb. 20** The District of Columbia Agrees to Establish Improved Air Pollution Monitoring at D.C. General Health Campus (Seneca)
- Feb. 24** Advisory: Senior EPA Official to Announce Environmental Justice Funding Three Philadelphia Groups Receiving Grants; Students to Showcase Environmental Projects (Damm/Seneca)
- Feb. 26** EPA Awards Environmental Justice Grants to Help Philadelphia Communities (Seneca)